

EPA Seeks To Clean Up 2 Missouri Sites

By Robert Manor
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Toxic waste at a mining complex in southwestern Missouri and at an industrial site near Cape Girardeau Mo., will be cleaned up according to a proposal announced Monday by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Superfund designation has been proposed for the Oronogo Duenweg Mining Belt, a 20-square mile maze of mines and mining waste near Joplin and the Missouri Electric Works site south of Cape Girardeau near Missouri Highway 161.

If the two sites win status in the Superfund they eventually will be cleaned up with federal money.

By far the larger of the two sites is the Oronogo Duenweg Mining Belt, between the towns of Oronogo and Duenweg.

An EPA spokesman, John Horton said that lead, zinc and cadmium were mined there from 1848 to the 1960s. Miners left behind 10 million tons of mine tailings littering thousands of acres in the area. EPA

technicians fear runoff from mine tailings may wash the minerals — which are toxic — into ground water supplying the wells of 1,500 people.

Horton said the Oronogo Duenweg site has counterparts in southeastern Kansas and northwestern Oklahoma. Those mining sites are undergoing cleanup.

Cleanup of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) is under consideration for the six-acre site south of Cape Girardeau.

Horton said electrical transformers were made and stored on the land for several decades. PCBs were a component of the oil used as insulation in the transformers. PCBs are considered highly toxic; they have been known to cause cancer in laboratory animals.

The land is contaminated to a depth of five feet in some places, Horton said. Leaking barrels of the PCB-laden oil were discovered four years ago at the site, he said.

Another site of PCB contamination — the Findett Corp.'s property near St. Charles — has been removed from

the Superfund list, Horton said. He said that the company had drained and excavated a pond contaminated with PCBs and that further cleanup would continue under other provisions of the EPA.

The two Missouri sites were among 229 nationwide that the EPA proposed to add to the Superfund list. The agency proposed the dropping of 30, including the site in the St. Charles area.

The action brings the priority list to 1,177 sites of which 378 remain proposals and 799 have been formally designated for cleanup. Eventually the agency has said the list could grow to about 2,500 sites.

SUPERFUND RECORDS



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